



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

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HASLAM GRANTS EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY TO CYNTOIA BROWN

Commutes life sentence to parole supervision

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam today granted executive clemency to Cyntoia Denise Brown by commuting her sentence of life imprisonment. She will be released to parole supervision on August 7, 2019, after serving 15 years in prison.

“This decision comes after careful consideration of what is a tragic and complex case,” Haslam said. “Cyntoia Brown committed, by her own admission, a horrific crime at the age of 16. Yet, imposing a life sentence on a juvenile that would require her to serve at least 51 years before even being eligible for parole consideration is too harsh, especially in light of the extraordinary steps Ms. Brown has taken to rebuild her life. Transformation should be accompanied by hope. So, I am commuting Ms. Brown’s sentence, subject to certain conditions.”

Brown’s parole conditions will require that she not violate any state or federal laws, and she will be subject to a release plan approved by the Tennessee Department of Correction and special supervision conditions, including employment, education, counseling, and community engagement requirements. Parole supervision will continue until August 7, 2029, at which point Brown’s sentence will expire. She will complete re-entry programming prior to her release from custody in August in order to facilitate a successful transition to the community.

In 2006, Brown was convicted by a Davidson County jury of first-degree murder and aggravated robbery for the 2004 murder of 43-year-old Nashville real estate agent Johnny Allen, which occurred when then-16-year-old Brown was picked up by Allen and taken to his home. She received a life sentence with the possibility of parole after serving a minimum of 51 years in prison, which means she would not have been eligible for parole consideration until 2055, at the earliest, without the governor’s action.

While in prison, Brown has earned her GED and completed an associate degree in 2015 through the Lipscomb LIFE program with a 4.0 GPA. It is anticipated that she will complete a bachelor’s degree in 2019. Numerous Department of Correction employees and volunteers attest to her extraordinary personal transformation while incarcerated, which will allow her to be a positive influence on the community upon release.

Earlier this year, the Tennessee Board of Parole issued a positive recommendation to the governor in favor of granting Brown a commutation.



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“While we have spent a considerable amount of time studying and implementing sentencing and criminal justice reform in our state, there is more work to be done,” Haslam said. “I am hopeful serious consideration of additional reforms will continue, especially with respect to the sentencing of juveniles.”

Executive clemency is an act of mercy or leniency by the governor after a criminal conviction. Haslam has previously granted five commutations, 15 pardons, and one exoneration. Haslam continues to review and consider additional clemency requests.

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